

REMARKS

Claims 22-27 are in the case.

The applicants have studied the Office Action dated September 22, 2003 and have made the changes believed appropriate to place the application in condition for allowance.

Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested.

Applicants acknowledge with thanks the Examiner's indication of allowability with regard to claims 22-27. The Examiner provided various reasons for allowance. Applicants note that the claims are directed to various combinations of features. It is respectfully submitted that the patentability of each of the allowed and allowable claims resides in the combination of features recited in that claim in addition to any features noted by the Examiner.

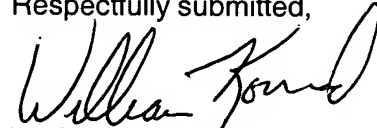
Claims 1-21 have been rejected under Sec. 103 as being unpatentable on the basis of the Kinnard reference in view of the Honma reference. The applicants respectfully disagree. However, in order to expedite the present application, claims 1-21 have been cancelled without prejudice, reserving the right to pursue the subject matter of these claims in a continuation application.

Non-elected claims 28-51 have been cancelled without prejudice, reserving the right to pursue the subject matter of these claims in a divisional application.

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It is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance.
Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested and allowance at an early date is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

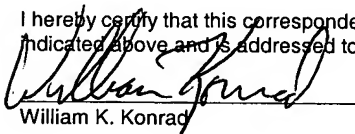

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail on the date indicated above and is addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.


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1/22/04
(Date)